

3

ENGLISH USAGE

Analogy



Verbal Analogies

An analogy is a relationship between words based on certain characteristic. When you say that your friend Robin is as crazy about skiing as you are about ice hockey, you are making an analogous comparison. In short, it looks like this:

Robin : skiing :: I : ice hockey

In other words, Robin feels about skiing just as I feel about ice hockey. Each of us is related to the sport named in the same way – we're crazy about it. Always express the relationship of the first pair in a sentence. The answer you seek must complement that sentence with another pair that expresses exactly the same relationship.



Toolkit

What's the best strategy?

Build a bridge – a sentence that defines the logical relationship between the two words in the question stem. Then test the bridge with each pair of words in the answer choices. Only one will work, assuming that you are able to eliminate all the incorrect choices.

1. **Build the Bridge** – A bridge is a short sentence that contains both words in the stem pair and shows how they are related. Let's call the two words in the stem pair "A" and "B". A typical bridge would define A in terms of B.

Example 

CARDIOLOGIST : HEART A cardiologist treats diseases of heart.

BAKER : BREAD A baker bakes bread.

SCALPEL : SURGEON A scalpel is a tool used by surgeon.

Remember



Note: The student can also solve some analogies without forming a bridge. If a word is a synonym or an antonym then the same relationship should exist between the answer choices.



Example: EXODUS : INFLUX

This is an antonym pair. So the answer choice should also have similar relationships.

Other examples:

PULCHRITUDE : UGLY: pulchritude means beauty.

TAUT : SLACK: taut means tightly stretched and slack is lax/loose

ZENITH : NADIR:zenith means pinnacle while nadir means low depth

ENCOMIUM : PRAISE

This is an example of synonym pair. So the answer choice should also have similar relationship.

Other examples:

AMULET : TALISMAN

PROPINQUITY : PROXIMITY

INSIPID : VAPID

This approach is useful in saving time from making a bridge but can be used only if same relationship exists in only one of the answer choices. The student would have to eventually form a bridge to eliminate and come to one answer choice.

2. **Narrow the Bridge** – This step is useful if in the previous step more than one answer choice is left after elimination.

Take an example

SCALPEL : SURGEON

The bridge was: Scalpel is a tool used by Surgeon.

Choices:

(1) computer : executive

Computer is a tool used by an executive? Retain it

(2) cook : knife

Cook is a tool used by knife? Eliminate it

(3) trowel : mason

Trowel is a tool used by a mason? Retain it



(4) fertilizer : farmer

Fertilizer is a tool used by a farmer?

Eliminate it

(5) saw : carpenter

Saw is a tool used by a carpenter?

Retain it

Now in this case as three choices are left, then it means that the bridge has to be redefined or narrowed to come to one choice.

New Bridge: Scalpel is a tool used by Surgeon to cut.

In this case, all choices except (5) are left. So answer is (5).



Toolkit

Tip for analogies: Don't waste your time in guessing the answer choice if you don't know the meaning of the stem words or the likely answer choice. But go for intelligent guessing. Barring a few exceptions, if two answers choices have the same relationship, they cannot be the answers. The narrower the pool of answer choices, higher would be the probability of getting an answer right.

Common Analogous Relationships: Analogies fall into patterns or types that tend to repeat on tests. Being comfortable with some of the basic ones should prove helpful.

1. **Antonyms – celestial : mundane :: pinnacle : nadir**

Your sentence reads: Celestial is the direct opposite of mundane, just as pinnacle is the direct opposite of nadir, Total opposites on both sides.

2. **Synonyms – stingy : miserly :: indigenous : native**

Stingy means miserly, just as indigenous means native. Both sides of the analogy balance because both show synonyms.

3. **Degree – warm : boiling :: cool : : gelid**

Warm is much less hot than boiling, just as cool is much less cold than gelid (frigid, frozen).

4. **Person Related to Tool, Major Trait, or Skill/Interest**

Example: **surgeon : scalpel : : bricklayer : trowel** A surgeon uses a scalpel as one major tool in his work, just as a bricklayer uses a trowel as one of his main tools.

Note that a noun representing a person is in first slot of each pair and the adjective we expect as the major describing trait is in the second slot of each. Remember to make a sentence that states the relationship of the first pair, and make it as precise as possible.

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5. **Person Related to Least Desirable Characteristic or to Something Lacking**
Example: accountant: inaccurate :: judge : corrupt The last thing an accountant should be is inaccurate, and the last thing a judge should be is corrupt. Again, the noun (person) is in the first slot, and the adjective naming the least desirable character is in the second slot of each pair.
6. **One of a Kind**
petunia : flower :: maple : tree A petunia is a flower, just as a maple is one kind of tree.
7. **Part of a whole**
verse : poem :: stanza : song A verse is a part of a poem, just as a stanza is a part of a song.
8. **End Product Related to Substance**
car : metal :: furniture : wood A car is typically constructed of metal, just as furniture is often constructed of wood.
9. **Cause and Effect (of Typical Result)**
aggression : war :: discord : altercation Aggression can lead to (or result in) a war, just as discord (disagreement) can lead to (or result in) an altercation (heated angry argument)
10. **Noun Related to Logical action/Purpose**
Example: Centrifuge : spin :: scissors : cut
A centrifuge spins, just as scissors cut.
11. **Relationships of Location/Description**
Example: camel : desert :: alligator : swamp
A camel is an animal of the desert, just as an alligator is an animal of the swamp. (This does not mean that we only see camels in the desert or alligators in a swamp, merely that each is a natural denizen of the named areas)
12. **Implied Relationships**
Example: clouds : sun :: hypocrisy : truth
Clouds hide (or block out) the sun, just as hypocrisy hides (or blocks out) truth.

Remember



WHEN WORKING WITH ANALOGIES, REMEMBER:

1. Analyze the given pair as precisely as possible
2. Express this relationship in a clause or sentence
3. Choose your own idea of a good answer – your pair of words – before looking at the answer choices
4. Eliminate bad answer choices one by one. Cross them out on your answer sheet.
5. Keep negative vs. positive concepts in mind. If one or both sides of an analogy require a negative word, for instance, you can discard any answers that show positive words in that particular slot.
6. Keep human vs. animal vs. plant vs. mineral concepts in mind. Comparing a human worker to another human worker is a better analogy than comparing human to animal.
7. Be alert to live vs. inanimate (nonliving) distinctions. A comparison between a human and an animal is more accurate than one between a live thing and an inanimate thing. A man uses a hammer just as an otter uses a rock for example, is a fair analogy that compares how one living things uses a tool to the way another living things uses a tool.

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